

SERMON

OCCASIONED

BY THE DEATH

OF

Mr. JOSIAH PRATT, sen. of Birmingham,

AND PREACHED

At St. MARY's CHAPEL,

On Sunday, March 12, 1797.

BY EDWARD BURN, A. M.

Whose faith follow, considering the END of their conversation,
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SERMON

OF

BY THE DEATH

MR. JOSIAH FLETCHER OF BIRMINGHAM

IN ST. MARY'S CHURCH

ON SUNDAY MORNING

THE 10TH OF FEBRUARY 1841

PRINTED BY

JOHN H. COLEMAN, 10, ST. MARK'S LANE, BIRMINGHAM



TO THE READER.

THE following Discourse solicits a *private* audience. It ventures into the world, as my friend passed through it, silently and without observation. Its object is not to exhibit the man, but to draw *your* attention to the "grace of God that was in him." In this view, the modesty of his character forbids the ostentation of funeral panegyric, and the simplicity of that Gospel which he professed equally prohibits it. The Sermon has not been *advertised*; not because the Author considered the thing in itself improper, but in deference to the feelings of those who best knew my friend's sentiments, and who consider that he would have shrunk from the idea, had it been proposed in his life-time.

At the same time it seemed desirable that the short memoirs of his experience, in his last illness, should not pass into oblivion; and especially in that circle where his principles

were most known, and his character the best appreciated. Indeed, it is the Author's full conviction that the principles of Christianity are never better studied, by mankind at large, than in their relation to *conduct*, and in their influence on *death*. The means of conviction here are more simple and impressivè, and consequently better adapted to the generality, than the most laboured deductions of the scholar, in defence of Christianity, however reputable to himself or beneficial to a very small part of mankind. One instance, of the vital power of religion, well made out, carries greater authority on my mind than the accumulated labours of the Vatican, were it possible that I could possess myself of all their arguments.

BIRMINGHAM, APRIL 3, 1797.



A SERMON.

Rev. Chap. xiv. 13.

**WRITE, BLESSED ARE THE DEAD, WHICH
DIE IN THE LORD.**

My Brethren!

YOU are in general no strangers to the event which has this day led me to the consideration of these words:—an event, in whatever view you consider it, that claims our particular regard, and that ought not to be suffered to pass without the most serious endeavour on *our* part to improve it.

To assist you in this endeavour is the sole object of the following discourse; and I confess I have entered on this attempt with the greater pleasure, because, in the case of our departed

friend, *every thing is clear*: in his principles, in his conversation, and in his end, there remains nothing perplexed, nothing to be made out nor any thing to be proved. It is a plain unequivocal instance of the power of Christianity, whether you regard that as a principle of knowledge, a fountain and a rule of action or a strong consolation in death. I say an instance of the power of Christianity: for, it was to the grace of the Gospel alone he delighted to acknowledge himself indebted for every thing; and it is to the praise of the glory of this grace, and with the view of leading others to seek for and prize it as he did, that this solemn event is now brought forward. I am convinced, from what I have been able to collect of his sentiments, had his opinion been asked on the best mode of improving this occasion, he would have said—"Preach Christ; and, if my experience be thought worthy of a place, in connection with that adorable subject, let it, I charge you, be mentioned only that *He may be magnified, whether it be in my life or death — for, to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain!*"*

* Philip. i. 20. 21.



WRITE, BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHICH DIE IN THE LORD.

The passage divides itself into two distinct propositions—into the *STATE* which is here expressed, “being in the Lord;” and into the happy *ISSUE* OR *CONSEQUENCE* of this state—that such “are blessed in death.”

Let us attentively consider the *first* of these points—for, until the *state* here referred to be well understood, we can have no scriptural ground to hope, that our departure from this world will be *blest*, either in itself or in its final consequences. This single consideration is sufficient to shew the importance of the subject; but if you consider, in addition to this, the very loose and erroneous manner in which this state is conceived of by the mass of Christians, it will, I trust, impress you still more strongly with the necessity of rightly understanding it. It is an affecting thought that, on the subject of religion, its plainest things are but too frequently misunderstood, and its weightiest realities the least regarded! Hence, on the question before us, what is it

to be in the Lord? It is thought by one a sufficient answer, to say, "I was born under the Christian Dispensation, and therefore I am in Christ, and not a heathen." By another, "I have been baptized, and therefore visibly admitted into his kingdom—of course I am in Christ, and regenerated." By a third person it is pleaded, "I am no extortioner, nor unjust; I am punctual in my attendance on Public Worship, and on the Sacrament—my conduct, though in some shades, perhaps, not exactly what would be required by an over strict view of morals, is, nevertheless, free from any very foul stain; and even in those instances where, through the unavoidable weakness of my nature, I fail; yet, placing against these my religious observances, the integrity of my transactions with others, my almsgivings, and, above all, *my goodness of heart*—I trust there can be no doubt but that, through the merits of Christ making up my deficiencies, I shall at last be accounted a good Christian, and die happy." There is a fourth class of people who will tell you, "We are no Pharisees—we think there is much wisdom in that injunction of Solomon, *Be not righteous over much*, and therefore we are none of those who lay

any great stress on *conduct*, either as it respects a rigid attention to religious services or an over scrupulous regard to morals. We think it enough that our *faith* be right, without perplexing ourselves about what are called its *evidences and fruits*—we are *in Christ*, and that is sufficient.”

Brethren ! our departed friend had not so learned Christ : he had been taught with St. Paul, that the first concern of a sinner, who is enquiring “ what he must do to be saved ? ” is, that *he may be found in him, not having on his own righteousness*. This one lesson lies at the very foundation of all experimental Godliness. Till this be in some measure understood, a man may indeed discover something of *a moral sense*, or, what St. Paul, in more intelligible language, calls the “ work of the law written on the heart,” and in consequence of this may exercise the virtues of an heathen ; but he neither feels nor can understand any thing of the *spirit peculiar to Christianity*. I speak here of a spirit peculiar to Christianity ; and I wish you to lay a particular stress upon this distinction, because it is a spirit or frame of mind, that neither ancient heathenism in the gross, nor heathenism embellished

by the aids of philosophy, nor modern heathenism, decorated in the abuse of Christianity, ever did or can produce.

For, consider what this spirit is—it is a spirit of simple and entire dependance upon another for everlasting life;—it is a desire of being “found in Christ,” and that in the only way in which a sinner can be benefitted by him. It is to believe in Him as our sacrifice and atonement for sin—to build upon Him as our foundation of hope towards God—to commit ourselves and our desperate cause into His hands, as our advocate and surety—“not having on our own righteousness,” but renouncing it; and that from a complete persuasion of its utter insufficiency in the sight of an Holy God.

In this spirit *peculiar to Christianity*, the sinner applies to that Physician of Souls whom the Gospel proposes, and he does this because he *feels* that he is *sick*. Like the poor woman who had spent her all upon many physicians, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse; he has discovered, that other methods of recovery are not only

useless, but are in themselves indications of the fearful progress and strength of the disease. He has been happily convinced that "there is none other Name given under Heaven by which we must be saved,"—that "other foundations can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ," and that "this is the record that God hath given unto us, Eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son: he that hath the Son of God hath Life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not Life."*

Our friend, now with God, knew well the sovereign virtues of this Great Physician: he had seriously "counted the cost" of building for eternity, and therefore this *Chief Corner Stone* was in his estimation *elect, precious!* He had long dwelt with admiration on this inestimable *Record*, and at no period with more lively and animating views of its excellence, than in his last illness. "He knew," not from the Scriptures alone, but from *experience*, "that the Son of God is come, and had given him an understanding to know Him that is true; and he was in Him that is true, even in his Son

* Acts iv. 12.—1 Corinth. iii. 11.—1 John v. 11, 12.

“ Jesus Christ, hereby embracing in his faith
 “ the true God and Eternal Life.”* Under this
 soul-reviving impresson he was heard to say,
 “ *My salvation is complete, quite complete in Jesus!*”

In this way, the *spirit peculiar to Christianity*
 is eminently shewn and distinguished: it leads
 its happy possessor to look for and to depend
 upon resources *out of himself*—to live upon the
 sovereign and unmerited bounty of another, to
 acknowledge *all his fresh springs* to be in Jesus,
 and to realize that rich attainment of poor sin-
 ners——“ I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in
 “ me; and the life that I live in the flesh, I
 “ live by the faith of the Son of God, who
 “ loved me, and gave Himself for me.”† May
 God teach us all the same lesson, and enrich us
 by the same blessed experience!

But, Secondly. “ If any man be in Christ,
 “ he is a new creature or creation.”‡—This is
 another and an essential part of the *state* into
 which we are now enquiring. Whatever the
 change here referred to may mean, it is very

* 1 John v. 20.

† Gal. ii. 20.

‡ 2 Corinth. v. 17.—Gal. vi. 15.

observable, that St. Paul compares it to the *first creation*, and that it is ascribed by him, in other parts of his writings, to the same Almighty Agency that worketh all in all. "A NEW CREATION."—This is certainly a very strong figure, and by far too strong, if his design were merely to express the imposition of a new name:—the name which a man assumes by passing from Judaism or Paganism, to Christianity. For, had this only been intended, the Apostle's design would have been better expressed by saying plainly—"If any man be in Christ he has changed his master, he is of a new sect, he is no longer the disciple of Socrates, of Plato or of Moses, but of Jesus Christ." This would have been to speak intelligibly, and according to the established rules of correct writing and reasoning, to which St. Paul was confessedly no stranger.

But, when I hear him say to the Corinthians, "God who caused the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts,"* &c.—"we are his workmanship created anew in Christ Jesus to good works,"†—when I read his af-

* 2 Corinth. iv. 6.

† Ephes. ii. 1 and 10.

fecting address to the Ephesians, "you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins;" and, when I consider his most encouraging exhortation to the Philipians, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure,"*—I ask myself these questions: if the heart be not naturally darkened and blind, whence the necessity of creative power to open and enlighten it? If the powers of my soul are not held suspended in spiritual death, in a death in trespasses and sins, whence the need of Omnipotence to recover and quicken them? And, if it be true, that I can of myself and when I will, convert and turn to God; by what rules of common sense am I thus instructed?—"It is God that worketh in you to will and to do of His own good pleasure."

What then is my conclusion? Am I to infer that these are words without meaning? Or, am I to consider that these strong and high rhetorical embellishments are intended to express the passage of a convert from Judaism, &c. to Christianity:—or, must I, by adopting either of these

* Phil. ii. 12. 13.

hypotheses, be impelled to conclude that my Bible, instead of "a high way in which the way-faring man, though a fool, shall not err," is a labyrinth of confusion, a path and maze of perplexity? I bless God, I feel myself reduced to neither of these desperate alternatives. I turn to our Lord's conference with Nicodemus: I hear Him there laying it down as a law of His kingdom—"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." I look farther into his discourse and find that, this is a birth not of the "flesh" nor according to any of its principles, but of the "spirit and from above." And comparing it with what the Evangelist records, in the first of John, when speaking of the very different reception our Saviour met with from different people of his own nation; I find this birth brought forward as the basis of that characteristic difference (faith) which distinguishes the sons of God. "But unto as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name: *which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*"*

* John iii. 1 and 1—12. 13.

This explanation of St. John is complete; it leaves nothing doubtful either as to the nature or the importance of this doctrine. It evidently shews that the highest act of religion is that of receiving Christ: that this act is *faith*, and that faith in its origin and saving exercises is itself to be resolved, not into any spontaneous act of the "natural man," but into that new and supernatural birth which is not of man, but of God.

From hence I infer that although in the "new creation," extensively considered, there be a co-operation on our part, yet that concurrence is not self-produced, does not originate from any independent act of the human will: and therefore, to represent man as "a free agent assisted," is confounding nature with grace, dispositions with faculties or powers—is completely to subvert the Apostle's axiom, "It is God that worketh in you to will and to do of His good pleasure."

And here we cannot but observe on the striking analogy between the first and the second creation: in *that*, the things which were made clearly evinced His eternal power and godhead—light, harmony and use sprang out of darkness

and confusion : in *this*, “ Old things are passed away, and behold ! all things are become new.” The new creature “ walks, not after the flesh, “ but after the spirit,”—his members that before were instruments of unrighteousness, unto iniquity, are now yielded up and consecrated to God. His body, in its powers and uses, he considers not his “ own, but bought with a price ;” and therefore he presents it daily as “ a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.” “ His conversation is in Heaven,”—it is chiefly occupied upon heavenly things or with a view to them :—not only is it chaste, guileless, instructive and according to the strictest truth, with his neighbour ; but it is “ walking with God,” as Enoch did, “ walking before Him in integrity,” as did Abraham : it is maintaining and realizing a daily sense of His presence, and holding a secret and spiritual intercourse with Him :—it is in one word, to “ live soberly, and righteously and godly in “ this present world.” *

If the preceding view of this doctrine required new proofs or any additional confirmation from

* Tit. ii. 12.

example, the instance of our departed brother might, with strictest reason and propriety, be referred to. No man had a more just or a stronger conviction of the importance of this doctrine: nor was it with him a matter of sentiment merely. Its *practical* influence on his tempers, his conversation and general habits was—(I will not say in the highest degree exemplary, for the modesty of his character forbids all excess of praise)—but certainly it *was such* as his cotemporaries in this congregation will recollect with pious emulation, his younger brethren with reverence, and even their children be referred to with every token of respect that should accompany the “memory of “the just,” and that proves it to be “blessed.”

I proceed now to our SECOND POINT, which was to consider the happy issue or consequence of being in this state—that such are “blessed in “their death.”

WRITE, BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHICH DIE IN THE LORD.

To illustrate this a little it will be necessary to bring to your recollection some of those inte-

resting views which the Scriptures give us of the *death of believers*. These will perhaps account for the pleasure that good men sometimes express in the contemplation of this subject; and it may serve also to correct a too common mistake, that the habitual consideration of death, as an event in prospect, must cramp and enfeeble the necessary exertions of life and be utterly incompatible with its true happiness. With a man who has his "portion in this life," who neither expects nor is prepared for any felicity beyond the grave, this may be the case—indeed, I do not see how it can be otherwise—and therefore I am not surprised at the different expedients that are employed to banish from the mind every association, or, where this is impracticable, to weaken and destroy every impression made upon it by this awful subject—but to believers, to those who "are in Christ," and in consequence of this union are become "new creatures," these expedients are not necessary.

"Death," saith St. Paul to all such, "is yours;" it is your *advantage*; and therefore, instead of shrinking from the prospect with horror, and considering death only as an enemy, you are to regard it as holding a place in the list of your pri-

privileges:—or, if nature will still consider it an enemy, you are to look upon and approach it as an enemy disarmed, and to “thank God who “giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus “Christ:”

First. “Death is blessed” to the Christian because it is *the labourer’s rest and the weary man’s sleep*—in dying “he rests from his labours”—“there the wicked cease from troubling, and the “weary are at rest.” Stephen in dying “fell asleep;” and we find this idea applied generally to the state of departed believers—“for them “that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” In the present world, the condition of the Christian is a mixed one, it is more or less marked by labour and sorrow. He has a great work to do, in “working out his own salvation with fear and “trembling,”—in mortifying sin, in overcoming the world and in honouring That holy Name by which he is called. He *sees* and *bears* much that “vexes his righteous soul:” in the wise appointment of his Heavenly Father, he *suffers* much that afflicts him; and in the daily experience of life, he finds continual cause for “heaviness and sorrow,” when reviewing the unfruitfulness and

discovering the treacheries of his own heart. But these exercises will not last always. After this day of "labour and sorrow," the Christian shall rest in the *evening*: like the first martyr, he shall find repose on the bed of death, and after having slept his sleep shall rise, not like the poor labourer who awakes to new cares, but to a state of unmixed and undisturbed felicity forever!

How welcome was this repose to our dear departed friend! But few men had a larger share of those trials which arise from constitutional infirmity. Seldom through the course of a life nearly lengthened out to the age of man, did he enjoy health without some considerable alloy of pain and languor. But it was in this way, and blessed be God he well knew it! his Heavenly Father was gradually and most graciously preparing him for Himself. On the Thursday morning before his death, he said to two of his children, who were expressing their affectionate solicitude about his health,—“Oh! how earnestly have I prayed “this night that my release might be signed! I “have trod many a weary step, but I am drawing near my journey’s end, and that’s a comfort to a traveller.” On the morning of his dis-

solution and as he approached nearer to his rest, his prospects became still brighter, and he spake of his decease in terms of uncommon animation and triumph. Amongst other excellent things, he said—"Now Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation! I never thought that my death bed would be so happy! Oh! I cannot tell half what I feel! Now is my salvation nearer than when I first believed—yes it is, it is! Oh! what cause for thankfulness have I and you all—but God forbid that I should have any spiritual pride, for I am a poor sinner saved freely by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

But again. "The death of such is blessed," because it is the *captive's deliverance*. The present state of believers is comparatively a state of captivity: for though the Christian is the "Lord's free man," and is happily delivered from the bondage of guilt and the dominion of concupiscence; he is nevertheless still "in the body." "This corruptible body presseth down the incorruptible spirit," and is for this, amongst other reasons, called by St. Paul "the bondage of corruption:" it impedes and hinders the soul in its

heavenly *race*; it contracts and holds in its exertions, when it would expand and embrace the "fulness of God;" and it throws weights on the rising desires, when the mind would disentangle itself from earth, and ascend to the source of its felicity. It was on these accounts that the apostle, in the 7th to the Romans, confessed himself wretched and prayed for deliverance. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" But in the death of the believer, this corruptible is put off, the snare that entangled the soul is broken, and the captive spirit completely and everlastingly delivered.

Much as our friend suffered from the unusual pressure of his "often infirmities," it was well known to himself that the happiness of the soul does not always nor principally depend on the temperament of the body;—and it was in his case often manifest to others, by the sweet serenity that beamed from and enlivened his countenance, even when emaciated and pallid through the gradual but visible decay of his constitution. Often, in the midst of all, has he found this house of God to be the "gate of Heaven!" but oh! how inconceivably must his powers and his sense

of enjoyment have been enlarged, on the first moment of his release from his earthly prison? He seemed indeed to anticipate this on the evening, and but a few minutes before the time, of his departure.

To one of his daughters, who stood weeping at his bed and enquiring how he was, he replied earnestly—"very well! my poor body is weak, " but what a happy creature shall I be, through " the countless ages of eternity!"

Thirdly. "The death of the righteous is blessed," because it is to them *the soldier's victory*. It must have appeared, from what you have already heard, that the Christian's life is a *warfare*, a "fight of faith" as well as a "way of pleasantness and a path of peace." Nor is this difficult to be accounted for. He has an active and powerful enemy to contend with, who is daily lying in wait, seeking to devour him. He has thrown off his yoke, and taken the Lord's side against this adversary. This is the true ground of the quarrel, and the daily cause of those spiritual conflicts which disturb the peace and endanger the safety of the Christian. He finds that

although his adversary has lost the citadel of the heart, he has still a party within, that favour his interests. But in *death* the conflict will be closed, and our adversary be swallowed up in victory.

This victory over death and every foe was greatly felt and discovered by our friend in his last hours. With the Apostle he could say, "O death where is thy sting! O grave where is thy victory!" Then, clasping his hands together with energy and triumph, he added,— "thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Glory be to the Father, Glory be to the Son, Glory be to the Holy Ghost." And, as if anxious to comprehend all duties in one, and to seal with his dying testimony the highest privilege of believers, he continued—"make much of Christ."

Lastly. The death of such as are "in the Lord" is blessed, because to them it is the *heir's entrance to glory*, to the complete enjoyment of the "purchased possession." The believer is an heir of God through Christ; he is *born* to an "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that

"fadeth not way." But the *possession* of this inheritance is yet distant, it is "laid up in Heaven for him." While therefore the Christian is "at home in the body, he is absent from the Lord." He has indeed the earnest of this inheritance *now*, but he is not yet come to the rest which the Lord his God hath spoken to him of—he must go over Jordan, to possess the good land. The complete fruition is after death. It was this glorious prospect that animated the hopes of St. Paul, when he desired to "depart and to be with Christ." He well knew that after death, and especially after the resurrection, the whole man shall be glorified, and called up to inherit forever. "Beloved, it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."—"Write," therefore, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth saith the spirit, they shall rest from their labours, and their works shall follow them."

What now remains, my Brethren, is the improvement of this solemn yet pleasing event to ourselves. Let us then learn to *estimate the value of principles by their influence on death*. This conside-

ration will be my apology, should one be at all necessary, for having said so much on the subject of principles, in the former part of this discourse. It is of the last importance to know what those doctrines are which lead to blessedness in death; for it must be obvious to every considerate hearer, that whatever fails you *here* is not worth living for.

Rest assured, my Brethren, the Gospel of Jesus, known in its scriptural purity and felt in its sanctifying and transforming influence on the heart and life, is the only rod and staff that will support you, in your passage through this dark valley. Every thing else will infallibly desert you. This alone is the path to victory. Nor is this the solitary and feeble testimony only of the man who addresses you. The suffrages of every age stand forward in support of this truth. You are "encompassed with a cloud of witnesses." Let such therefore, who consider principles indifferent, provided the man be sincere, reflect seriously on what they have now heard. It is not every principle, however sincerely believed, that will stand the shock of dissolution. Saul of Tarsus "verily believed that he ought to have done

"many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth:"* but will any reflecting man who hears me say that, he would think himself safe in appearing before God, with a sincerity like *that*? I apprehend not. Consider therefore *what* you believe.

Nor is this all. "Faith worketh by love," "and love," the Apostle tells us, "is the fulfilling of the law." Take heed therefore *how* you hear. Religion is no farther valuable to us than it is *operative*. You will do well to consider this point as illustrated by St. James, in the case of Abraham. "Seest thou how faith wrought "with his works, and by works was his faith "made perfect."† May the dying testimony of our departed friend, accompanied by the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, confirm this truth to every heart!

Again. We in fact have nothing so much to regret, in the death of our brother, as our own *indisposition to improvement*. The call of this day is loud and distinct to this congregation. The living example of our friend is no more. We have lost *this*, and that is saying enough. But let

* Acts xxvi. 9.

† Jas. ii. 21 to the end.

his endeavour to repair his loss. May you, his elder brethren, who have long delighted to walk with him in the ways of Zion, recover to us what we have all lost,—in the lovely order of his attendance in this house of God, in the exemplary humility of his carriage, in the affectionate fidelity of his friendship, in his benevolence to the distressed, in the ardour of his zeal for the progress of experimental religion, and in the general and unabated care which he manifested for all his brethren!

I rejoice in *knowing* that there are *many* present who will, in these respects, lay themselves out for the consolation of a bereaved and deeply afflicted congregation. And let it be their encouragement, in this labour of love, and under all the infirmities of their declining years, to recollect that, their dear and faithful companion is entered into his rest, and that “their saluation is nearer than when they first believed.”

Much might be said to the younger part of this congregation. There are however some leading ideas, in the character of our departed friend, that must not be omitted. In his example, his light was rather clear and steady than overwhelming

and marvellous. His zeal was equally removed from the indifference of the formalist and the fierceness of the bigot. His Christian affection was tempered by a holy and jealous watchfulness over the walk of his brethren. His attainments in grace were rather the effect of growth, than the hasty and immature productions of impulse. His fruits were in their season; and the general course of his life was directed more by the constant presence and authority of truth upon the mind, than by the floating uncertainties of various opinion or the vehement warmth of particular occasions. It was, in a word, the "path of the just which shineth more and more to the perfect day."

Let the impression of such a character, my young friends, sink deeply into all your minds! that "walking in the steps of his faith," you may contribute your share in repairing his loss; and being "planted in the house of the Lord," you may like him flourish in the courts of the "house of our God, still bringing forth fruit in old age: to shew that the Lord is upright: he is our rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him." *

* Ps. xcii. 4 last.

But there is one reflection more that presses upon my mind, and awful as it is, I cannot dismiss you without giving it utterance. It is this. In the death of the unbeliever (for he also must die!) every thing is *reversed*, is the very opposite to what you have now heard. Did we say that "death is the sleep and rest" of the true Christian? The dying unbeliever, instead of retiring to rest and sleeping in Jesus, *awakes for the first time!* Like Dives he slumbers away the inestimable hours and opportunities of life, nor seems aware of the event that must follow, on a course of impenitence, till like him he "lifts up his eyes in torment," and takes a despairing survey of the irretrievable wretchedness of his condition! Is death to the Christian "the captive's deliverance?" To the impenitent, it is a deliverance into the power of the tormenters! To *him*, death, in the place of victory, is an entire and an everlasting defeat! Far from introducing *him* to an "inheritance," it cuts him off from every thing here, and leaves him bereaved and destitute forever! Brethren! I solemnly and most affectionately adjure you, **THINK ON THESE THINGS!**

But there is one reflection more that presses upon my mind, and awful as it is, I cannot dismiss you without giving it utterance. It is this: In the death of the unbeliever (for he also must die!) everything is reversed, is the very opposite to what you have now heard. Did we say that "death is the sleep and rest" of the Christian? The dying unbeliever, instead of retiring to rest and sleeping in Jesus, awakes for the first time! Like David he slumbers away the inestimable hours and opportunities of life, not seems aware of the event that must follow, on a course of impenitence, till like him he "lifts up" his eyes in torment, and takes a dispiriting survey of the irretrievable wretchedness of his condition! Is death to the Christian "the deliverance"? To the impenitent, it is a deliverance into the power of the tormentors! To him death, in the place of victory, is an entire and an everlasting defeat! Far from introducing him to an "inheritance," it cuts him off from everything here, and leaves him bereaved and destitute forever! Brethren! I solemnly and most affectionately adjure you, think on these things!

